

# STONE WALLS



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Drum  
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## — Editorial —

As I sit here and write this editorial, it is a beautiful Fall morning. By the time you read it, winter will be with us. Everyone will have settled down after weeks of shopping, parties, and family get-togethers. All of which leaves one rather drained.

Some of us have settled in for a long, hard winter, while others prefer to think of winter as a quiet, serene, and peaceful time. I like to think of winter as the latter.

I enjoy it as a time to take long walks in the new fallen snow, watch the birds at the feeders, write long over-due letters or just settle down with a good book. It is also a good time to work on hobbies.

Winter is also a time to look ahead to beautiful spring days, looking at seed catalogs to plan our gardens, and dream of that summer vacation.

Sitting, looking out at the beautiful clean white wonderland is a wonderful time to think of days gone by, days when life was less hectic, simpler and not so commercialized. A good time to start a journal or diary for our grandchildren and their children to read some peaceful winter day many years from now.

Better yet, put some of those memories in writing and submit them to *Stone Walls*. Let us put them into print for you. There are so many beautiful memories out there that should be preserved for future generations. Let us hear from you.

From the *Stone Walls Editorial Board*, may I wish each of you a healthy, peaceful, and contented Happy New Year.

Grace Wheeler

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## — Letter to the Editors —

Dear Friends,

I so much appreciate the *Stone Walls* publications. I want you to know that it is really a treasure. Every time I have the time to sit down and enjoy it, it makes me long for the peaceful memories of my childhood in Washington, Massachusetts.

My parents are Walter Beckwith, deceased, and Ruth Corey Beckwith, now residing in Richmond, Mass.

Childhood years were spent on my parents' parcel of land on the Washington Mountain Road. I was born 3-3-50 at home during one of the largest snow storms of the season. My mother was attended by Dr. Bright of Becket and my Aunt Kathrine Wood of Dalton, Mass.

When I was two years old, my father and two older brothers Preston and David, completed the fieldstone house, which still remains on the property.

As I grew and became aware of my father's love of the land, I also became aware of his ability to lay up a stone wall. He laid up a section of the lawn area near the stone house, and close by the weeping willow trees, next to the brook running through the property.

Along the back and sides of the property were stone walls intermittently standing and showing the care of their erectors, but also showing the destruction caused by upheaval of the ground from trees growing by and through them, or the holes caused by vandals who lacked the dignity of this form of artwork and surveying of the boundaries of the property ownership.

How can we express the peaceful beauty of a stonewall bordering the resting place of our loved ones?

How can we express the tranquility of a spring morning? The sun causing steam to rise from the stonewalls, blocks covered with yellow-green moss and forget-me-nots sprinkled at her base, running along the ground and blessing the bank down to the gently flowing brook.

Many a bedtime story for children can be conjured up about the woodland creatures that inhabit the stonewalls of the Berkshires.

The personal satisfaction, the thankfulness to my creator and the longing to return to the tranquility of those wonderful structures cannot be released and expressed sufficiently to the readers of "*Stone Walls*" from my heart.

As a young adult, I sought the knowledge of Stonewalls in distant places.

As a mother, I seek to portray the guidelines of stable borders expressed in the stonewalls precision.





As a member of society, I desire to express to my fellow man a cornerstone strength held by the pioneer families of the Berkshire Hills.

When my years flee and time grows short for me, I pray that retirement allows me to return and experience the loved walls again, hoping that, at that time, civilization will not have swallowed up the original beauty of the Berkshire stonewalls.

Thanks again, "*Stone Walls.*"

*Vivian Beckwith McQuillan*

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## *The Granite Quarries and the Stone Sheds:*

Since the Civil War days and until shortly after the end of World War II, Chester was known as "Granite Town" or "Quarry Town." An excellent quality grey granite, very hard and flawless, was excavated from the several open quarry holes in this area during the above period of time. The principal quarries were located in the Blandford-Becket area. The Taite Brothers Granite Co. transported a fair grade from a quarry in Chesterfield, across the "Dead Branch" brook, which flows out of Pine Island Lake and into the East Branch of the Westfield River. A five-mile-long spur railroad track was laid to the Becket quarries and the huge chunks of stone were transported by rail to the local "stone sheds." Here they were cut

up, polished, carved and lettered for monuments and tomb stones. A great deal of the rough material was shipped all over the country to be used in the building of bridges and other permanent structures. More than one hundred skilled stone-cutters were employed here. Later, several solid-rubber-tired trucks brought the granite blocks to the stone-sheds from the quarries. Competition from the softer, less durable Indiana limestone brought an end to the extensive quarrying of granite. Then, with the advent of the sand-blasting technique for carving and lettering stone, the skilled artisans found themselves out of work. So ended another era of prosperity in this community.

*Carl Libardi*

# *My Autobiography*

**Jeannie MacInnes (Joyal) Cooper**

**Born November 19, 1917**

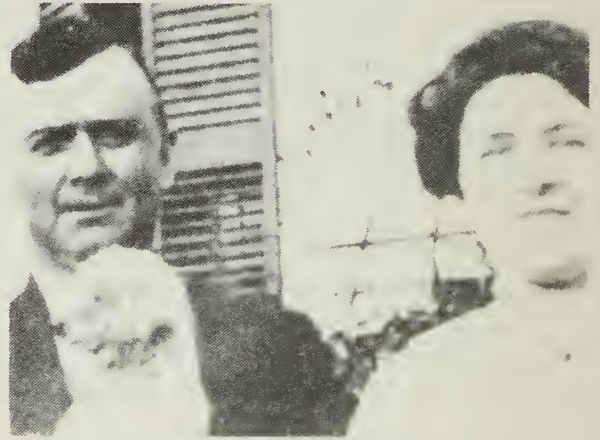
**Parents; Alfred Napoleon Joyal  
Jean Campbell MacInnes**

I lived a little while in Worcester where parents worked at the Westborough State Hospital as cooks. Mother had a talent for making pastries and decorating tables for special luncheons.

I moved to New Salem where we lived on a small farm. I have my earliest memories of being there, picking low-bush blueberries which I called "dodies." I still love twilight—one such time, we sat with our mother by the barn, waiting for my father's return from work in Orange.

We owned a carriage with a fringe on top, also a buggy and a sleigh. Probably most families had similar conveyances. Shopping was done in Orange. I recall walking with my mother on a brick sidewalk by a white fence. It must have been fall as there were leaves on the sidewalk. My mother wore a black and white checked suit and a wide-brimmed pink hat. At that time, she wore long skirts and her jacket was below hip length, and fitted. I have seen pictures of her wearing what we may call a Gibson-girl blouse—high at the neck. My father said that she always greeted him with a smile.

While we lived in New Salem, I managed to cut my right foot badly while turning a somersault on a couch (horse-hair covered) which stood in front of our fireplace. A piece of zinc which covered the



*Parents, Alfred and Jean Joyal  
about 1916*

fireplace was untacked at the top corner and I caught my foot on it. A crescent-shaped scar remains as a reminder. My mother quickly bandaged it and someone got word to the doctor. We had no phone. I do remember sitting on the porch later with the foot all bandaged.

Baths were taken in a wash-tub in the kitchen on Saturday nights. Water was drawn from a pump and heated in a boiler on the stove. There was also a reservoir at the side of the stove and very often a pan of milk was kept there to sour for cottage cheese which we ate with sugar and cream poured on it.

Monday was wash day for my mother who used a scrub board and Fels-Naptha soap. Tuesday meant ironing. I still remember the smell of hot iron on cloth. Irons were heated on the stove and changed as they cooled.



*3 years old in New Salem*

I might have been about five when we sold the farm and moved to Spencer. By then, my brother and sister had joined the family. We lived in two different houses in that town and probably were not there very long. I celebrated my 6th birthday in Spencer and remember the deep snow.

Mother baked on Saturdays and would let me have a little piece of dough to shape my own bread. She also had a Singer sewing machine and I was fascinated by the various attachments. Somehow, I must have found out the knack of stitching too, because one day I sewed the bottom of a skirt together—that is the back to the front, right across the bottom. Had she lived, my mother would have shown me how to *really* sew.

From Spencer, we lived in Worcester a short time, and I think it was then that my mother became ill after attending a funeral in Heath during cold weather. Then we spent a summer in Cleveland, Ohio, traveling by train in an upper berth—my mother and the three of us children in one berth.

We visited an aunt and uncle out there.

It must have been soon afterward that our mother entered the Sanitarium in Rutland, Mass., where she died in March, 1925. Alfred, Dorothy and I were boarded here and there during her illness. Usually the other two were together. We stayed for awhile with our grandparents on Memorial Ave. in West Springfield, Elizabeth and Malcolm MacInnes. From there, I stayed with a family named Morgenstern and then one named Ferrioli, where my father boarded. He worked at the New England Box Shop and I attended the Union St. School. I also recall staying with another family in West Springfield where the three of us were together, in fact the four of us. The woman made doughnuts and there was a quince tree in the yard.

Perhaps it was from that house that I went to live in nearby Feeding Hills with cousins, Mary Ann and Leonard Tetreault. My father had a room there, too. I was quite happy there, on a farm with loving relatives.

That was a memorable year. I saw my first eclipse, had a wonderful birthday party but wouldn't eat the green frosting, took a shine to a boy named Alvin (funny how history repeats itself). A favorite gift was a



*Alfred on old Billy Jean at the plow*





*The old North School  
North Heath, 1936*

pencil box complete with a few crayons and pictures to color.

When my mother died, I was taken to live with Mary Ann's sister, Francea, in North Heath. She wanted to bring me up, which was fine, except that in doing so, she prepared me for First Communion. My father had promised my mother to bring us up as Protestants, so felt he must remove me to a Protestant atmosphere. I was happy with Francea—here again on a farm. I attended North School where we played softball and had picnics with our teacher, Frank Gleason. Walking to school past woods, I hurried along because I "knew" there were bears and Indians hiding. I was 7.

It was my job to wash dishes. We set them on a drying rack above the sink. A large mirror also hung there, which I couldn't help peeking at. However, George, Francea's husband, decided that I might become vain and hung a towel over the mirror so I'd tend to business.

Another chore was to bring the cows home from the pasture. I kept an eye out for bears and Indians of course.

Possibly North School was closed because that fall, I transferred to Branch School, which was reached by quite a hike in another direction.

Next, I was taken to West Springfield to live with my father, brother, and sister in the home of Mrs. Jennie Whitcomb. That must have been a busy year because we lived in Conway, (the three of us children) for a little while—went to another school. The region was called Shirkshire. It was there that we had measles. I was learning to read and loved to read anything from the newspaper to Sears Catalogue. While we were sick with measles, the window shades were kept down to protect our eyes from the light, but I still read when no one was looking.

It was also there that I was made to use my right hand for writing. Many people were adamant about children using their right hands, just as though the left was wrong.

As I say, 1925-1926 must have been busy because my father married Mrs. Whitcomb in Sept. 1926. She was a wonderful step-mother. We had, and may still have, three step-sisters, Dorothy, Vivian and Edith.



*1926 — at the Doane Home*



Just about the time my father was re-married, he took the three of us children to live in the Doane Home in Longmeadow. It no longer exists. We lived there for about three years—Alfred in the boy's house and Dorothy and I in the girl's house. We all met at meal times and went to school together to the Converse St. School. On Sundays, we all walked to the Congregational Church where we attended church school and services. Easter was a memorable time each year with egg hunts and everyone decked out in fresh spring clothes. One year, our step-mother made matching green dimity dresses, sprigged with tiny rose buds for my sister and I. Later, she dressed a French doll for me in the same material. We had to wear long underwear until the warm days of May and, one year, I daringly cut off the legs of mine. The matron scolded me and brought me before the head of trustees—or something. Somehow, I never was sorry.

Sometimes I walked to the town library and brought home, one after the other, just about every book on Roman and Greek mythology. I have mostly good memories of the Doane Home and am still in contact with two of the others who lived there. We all explored various local spots, some quite a distance away, the airport for one, enjoyed playing in what they called the "dingle" (part of Forest Park), where we played house in overhanging bushes and slid down the wooden toboggan slide in summer. Not very smart when one is wearing new white bloomers—the seat became black. It was fun though!

Lindy flew the Atlantic and there was a change in presidents while we lived in Longmeadow. Meanwhile, my father and step-mother visited us about once a week. In June of 1929, we all moved to a farm in Worthington. That was a thrill and an adventure, riding up there in the back of a

milk truck with our boxes piled around us. For a few days, I rose very early; just to be near my father and enjoy the dewy summer mornings. Alfred had to rise early and help our father in the barn and the fields. He couldn't have been more than nine at the time. I had to help in the house—a real bore when I preferred gathering eggs.

When winter came, our step-mother went to be with a daughter in the city and I had to take over housekeeping duties. We had a succession of housekeepers, but somewhere along the line, I scrubbed clothes as my mother had, tried to bake a pie with my father's coaching. He knew a lot about cooking. I was about eleven—had my twelfth birthday while we lived on that farm known as "Eastview."

The three of us went to school in a building closed long ago and designated a historical site—the Riverside School. It was all in one room, so I listened to the upper classes when my work was done, or even while doing it, wanting to raise a hand with an answer sometimes. Alfred helped keep the wood-box filled and the stove going, and was paid to sweep up after school. Dorothy and I usually stayed with him since school let out at 4 o'clock and it was just about dark when we reached home in the winter.

From Eastview Farm, we moved a few miles away to Wellsmere Farm, a larger place with a big barn and a 14-room house. We stayed there about 2 years. My step-mother passed away in December 1931. We got along somehow that winter. Dorothy was quite sick and went to stay in the home of Dr. Mary Snook in Chesterfield until she was well.

In May of 1932, we moved once more, this time to the Eben Shaw farm in Lithia. I kept house until relatives came to share the work for the sake of a home. They were related to our step-mother. We had been to

two different schools in Worthington, Riverside and the Corners School. In Goshen, we attended the Center School. I was only there a matter of weeks and graduated with the eighth grade.

One of my classmates told me about Smith's School in Northampton, where one could learn domestic arts. I decided it would help me to be a better home-maker for my father, brother and sister. I could easily have gone to Williamsburg High School and learned how to cook and sew later. No one pointed out that course of action.

As it was, my father died in Dec. 1932. He was in a hospital miles away from us. Just before we left Goshen to go our separate ways, my father had called the head selectman, George Barrus and made arrangements for the state of Massachusetts to provide for our care. At the time they took over, I was living with a fine Catholic family and very contented. On Sundays, I attended the Florence Congregational Church, but law is law, and I was taken to another home. Happily, people were always kind to me. That particular family had a nine-month old baby and I loved caring for him. Soon, they moved to West Springfield and wanted me to transfer to the West Springfield High School.

By then, I was in my second year at Smith's School and determined to finish at least one course I'd started, and with honors. After some pleading, I was allowed to stay, but that meant another home, this time with friends of the previous family whom I had met several times. Mr. and Mrs. Hatch had a two-year old daughter, Nancy, who was like a little sister to me. At last I had some sort of anchor.

Graduation came in June, 1936. Just prior to that event, I began a job in Cummington, keeping house for the director of the "Playhouse-in-the-Hills." A bonus

was the opportunity to attend art class and those in dramatic reading as well as concerts. Miss Frazier encouraged me to read any book in her well-stocked library and allowed me to use her sewing machine.

Summers were fine but Miss Frazier closed her house at Christmas-time and spent the winter in New Jersey. I found temporary work as a waitress at Beckmann's and stayed with a kindly woman, Mrs. Congdon.

After a second summer, I decided to move on to night school, hopefully to learn typing and shorthand. Well, I did go to Commercial College for awhile, but typing class was a disaster—I couldn't concentrate with so many others in the room.

I had a job at the City Infirmary which lasted about 7 years, first doing housework and then cooking; quite a challenge. At one point, I visited two schools in New York City, one for interior decorating and the other for dress design. The latter was tempting, but further thought convinced me that to be successful, one would face a lot of competition and might be expected to lead a social life which repulsed me—cocktail parties, etc. I am not that competitive.

Just about then, I met Al Cooper. We dated for about 3 years. I felt very much at ease with him and hoped for a future together. We were lucky to have had a happy marriage, allowing for personal growth and a wonderful family of four sons and three daughters. Now they are all married and there are 16 grandchildren to enjoy.



*With all our children, 1958*

# HORACE HATCH TAVERN

## *and families who lived there*

Information Compiled By: Grace Barr Wheeler

I find the first mention of a dwelling being on the property in 1790. The land then belonged to Levi Dewey who ran a blacksmith shop there. Levi, son of Aaron Dewey, was born January 28, 1764 in Westfield, MA. He died April 30, 1827 at the age of 63, in Meadville, PA., where he had moved in June of 1817 by ox-teams, from Norwich Bridge, Huntington, Mass. While there, he had been a blacksmith, was a deacon of the Baptist Church, and was considered a marvel of business integrity, and irreproachable in character. He appears as a private on a pay-roll of Capt. Hezekiah Russell's company, serving from June 17, 1782 to Sept. 27, 1784.

In 1791, Levi married Mary Scott, daughter of Lt. David Scott of Norwich, Mass. She died at the age of 65 on Dec. 24, 1836 in Meadville, PA. While living in Norwich, they had the following children born there:

- (1) Levi, Jr. — born Feb. 14, 1792
- (2) Ann — born Jan. 24, 1794
- (3) Susan — born April 3, 1796
- (4) David — born March 12, 1798
- (5) Justin — born April 4, 1800
- (6) Stillman — born Feb. 16, 1802
- (7) Amanda — born July 9, 1804
- (8) Mary — born March 19, 1808
- (9) Sarah — born April 16, 1811

I believe most of these children remained in the Norwich area.

About the time Levi leaves for Meadville, I find he sold to one Horace Hatch, formerly of Southampton, then of Norwich. According to Vital Records of Montgomery, Horace Hatch of Norwich married Elizabeth Shirliff of Montgomery on April 2, 1817. This was three months before he bought the land from Levi Dewey. Sometime in the early part of 1818, Horace began to build a large house connecting onto an existing dwelling already on the property. According to "Everts History of the Connecticut Valley," Hatch kept a tavern there from 1825 to 1840.

During the time Horace owned the tavern, I find he and his wife had the following born to them:

Horace Lyman	born Feb. 8, 1818 died Nov. 8, 1823
Elizabeth Ann	born Feb. 17, 1820 died the same day
Horace Franklin	born Mar. 27, 1825 died Jan. 13, 1826
Emily	born April 14, 1828 died April 17, 1829
Daniel Atherton	born May 25, 1830 died Jan. 22, 1832

I have not found any records of any children born to them who lived to adulthood.

In recent correspondence with Daniel Frohman of Bellows Falls, VT, I am told that, "during the time period when the old homestead was a tavern, it was also the





*Horace Hatch House taken about 1890.*

stage coach stop for stages running from Northampton. The reason it was chosen for a stop-over was most likely due to the blacksmith shop and the tavern. It is also stated that mail carriers changed horses here during that time. By the time Mr. Frohman's great-great grandparents owned the house and blacksmith shop, the house no longer was a tavern. Mr. Frohman's families were the Gorhams and Alvords.

According to early town tax records, I find Horace Hatch assessed in 1846 for the following:

1 house	\$235.00
1 barn	\$ 75.00
1 store	\$150.00
1 blacksmith shop	\$190.00
1 shoe shop	\$ 10.00
15 acres of mowing and tillage	\$210.00
20 acres of woodland	\$ 60.00

20 acres of pasture and tillage	\$100.00
1 horse	\$ 25.00
2 cows	\$9.00 each
2 swine	\$2.00 each

Total Tax Bill for Year was \$63.00

Horace's wife Elizabeth died at the age of 58 on April 12, 1854. Soon after this, I find in Probate Court Records that Horace was declared an insane man and a Mr. A. Stanton was made guardian over him and his estate. Is it any wonder after losing all his children and his wife? Horace died a broken, insane man on June 9, 1868 at the age of 74.

He, his wife and children are all buried at the Norwich Bridge Cemetery, which during the winter, can be seen from the upstairs bedroom window of the Old Horace Hatch Tavern.

Soon after his death, the property was sold to Horace and Mary Gorham. In 1891, the Gorhams sold about 20 acres to Francis Clark and James Axtell. Axtell built a house on part of the land, which is now the home of Wayne Fisk.

After Mary's death, her husband sold the remaining land, house, shop, etc. to their daughter, Kitina Alvord, for the sum of \$100.00. Kitina was the wife of Justus Alvord, who was also a blacksmith. They, in turn, many years later, for the sum of \$1.00, a comfortable support and a decent burial, turned everything over to their son, George, who ran a blacksmith shop there until his death in 1939.

For a few years after that, the house was rented. In 1941, my father and mother, Guy Barr and his wife Cora, bought the house. My father passed away March 17, 1967. In June of 1970, my husband and I bought the house from my mother. She made her home with us until 1981, when due to ill health, she had to go

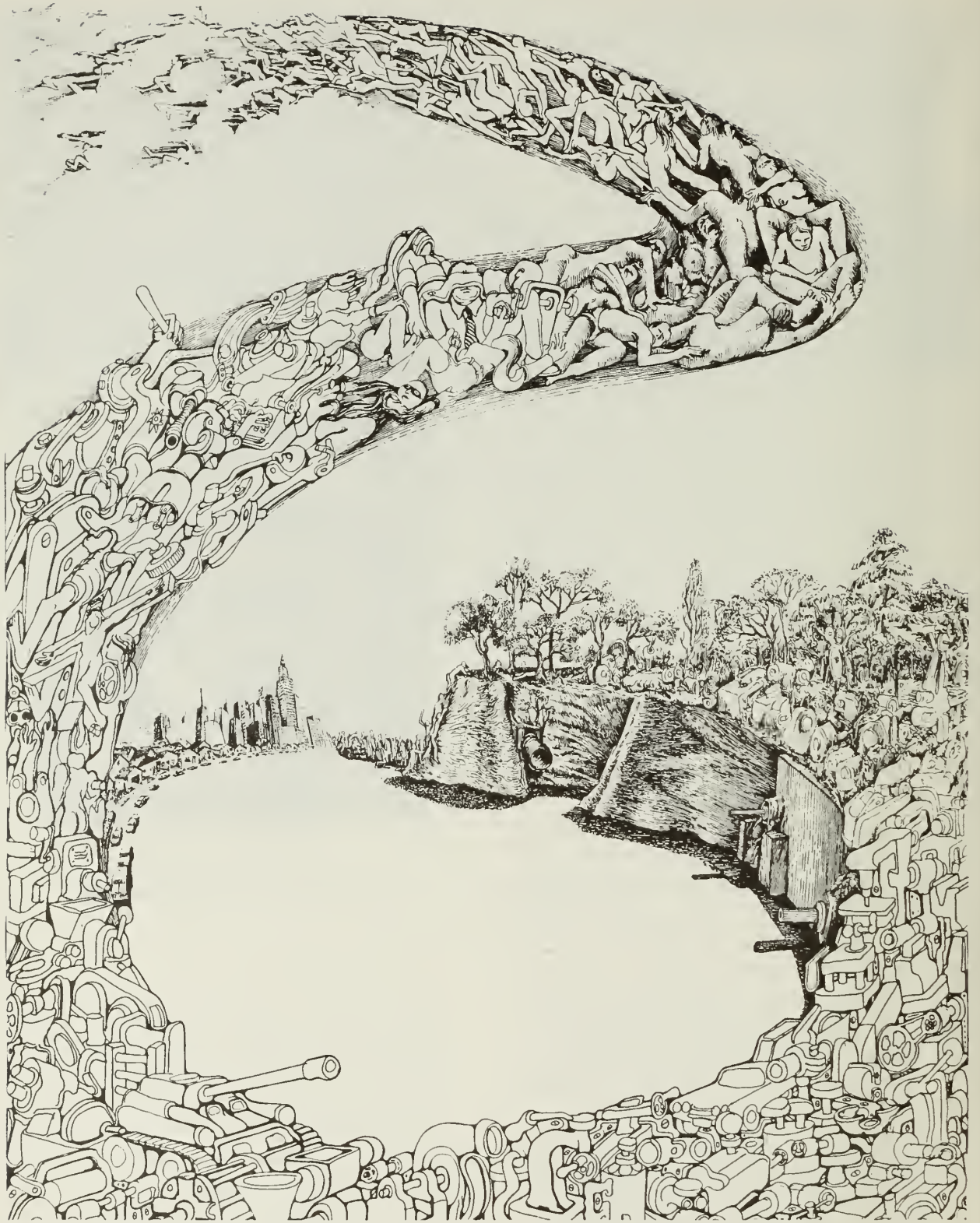
to a nursing home.

For about five years after the second world war, my parents ran a small diner-type eating place, called the Riverbreeze. It was located on the river bank, right in front of the old blacksmith shop. In 1972, I opened the Riverbreeze Antique Shop in the old blacksmith shop. It was at this time we tore down the diner. So, for nearly 197 years, some sort of business has been run on the old homestead. During that time, only six families have owned it.



*Riverbreeze "1951"*  
*Cora Barr and grand-daughter*





## TRANSCENDENCE

Throw away and buy new in an attempt to transcend nature.



# GERALD WISE

by *Natalie Birrell*

Up and down a dirt road, off of route 23 in Blandford, is a white farmhouse which has been there long enough to seem part of the land. Gerry Wise had been teaching drawing at Mankato State University in Minnesota before moving here with his family.

"I was tired of living in suburbia, being surrounded by others and having a way of life forced on me where I was unable to act freely. I didn't want my behavior to be obviously inappropriate or offensive to my neighbors. I want my home, yard and garden to look like my own, not an extension of some neatly manicured neighborhood policy. I want my life and my home to be as one struggling with nature, not dominating it. There is much time and energy spent in maintaining the illusion that man is in complete control."

"Living out here is a challenge. You can't farm it commercially, but you can raise a garden. I heat with wood and find the aerobic effect of splitting wood and working in the garden balance the concentration and discipline which I wouldn't impose on anyone else."

His art, detailed ink drawings of his visualizations, demand this kind of concentration. He feels things with his eyes, then cares very much that he gets the drawing just as he conceived it.

"It isn't just the appearance that I want to get down. To represent things exactly is a kind of joke. In the end, you construct what you think anyway."

His pictures represent the thought and feeling behind the appearance. For this reason, as we talked, the conversation wandered to thoughts on ecology, the bal-

ance of nature and the effect on the land of everyone feeling that so much is necessary to sustain life.

"Everyone throws away what loses popularity, 'the old stuff,' along with mounds of cardboard and paper and plastic used to package the latest popular items."

Some of his pictures show people immersed in their own junk. The drawings were done long before the garbage barge brought this problem to our consciousness.

"Ideas exist in our unconscious and can be visualized and projected long before they are expressed. Images in the artist's mind emerge from the unconscious source when anxiety or fear bring them to the surface. Anyone seeing a potential problem or threat to his existence feels compelled to do or say something about it. This artist is a loner, but cares deeply about the survival of humanity. His art sometimes is considered subversive, since to create new forms or a new way of seeing, he has to attack existing forms. The artist is always mistrusted in two ways. To have an original idea or pursue his vision, he must be alone, which makes him suspect. Secondly, when he is alone, away from social and economic pressures, he finds that social and economic reasons are precisely what keeps most people from seeing anything beyond these limits. In other words, to see life in a new way, one must be beyond the limits of time and place. This, of course, makes the artist an outsider and further suspect. This is where the artist must remain if he is to maintain integrity."





MALESTROM



We walked out into the garden. He said that his garden meanders like his drawings. Serpentine mounds, accommodating the rocks too large to move with the design, accentuated with smaller stones. With the top soil concentrated in the mounds and enhanced with manure from his neighbor's sheep, flowers and vegetables grew luxuriantly.

"You express yourself with your garden. Nature bends you, allowing you to assert yourself, but controlling the final outcome with seen and unseen forces."

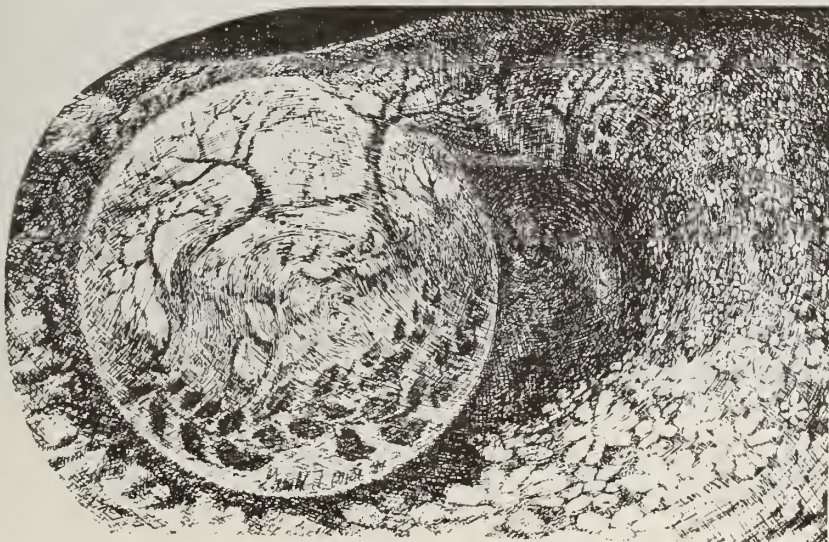
To be able to observe from these hills, to experience the light through the trees with the exaggerated seasonal differences, as the sun swings low on the horizon during the winter months is a privilege to Gerry Wise. To perfect his technique and to keep pushing to communicate with his art, he works long hours getting the light and dark of his drawings just right.

"Opaque patches of cloud and fog give an entirely different perspective. You get back unexpected forms. With these contrasts and the adjustments your eye must make, your mind remains open and you really see. If you look at a forest and estimate board feet, you may never see other things that make it a forest."

He said that, because we feel insecure, we look for images that make us feel comfortable. Television feeds these images and creates more. Repeated, these pictures have a numbing effect. TVs become our gravestones, as our ability to see for ourselves is deadened. This thought is graphically expressed in the drawing titled, "Grave Markers."

Another of his drawings, "Malestrom," suggests uncontrolled change. It depicts people being sucked into the unknown along with the products of our culture. Some seem to struggle and hold back. Others use escapist measures. Others seem to be enjoying the ride.

I drove away behind a large road scraper, which was making the dirt road passable. It took the man who drove the scraper only one morning to do the work of a whole crew. There was no aerobic effect from the work, no chance to communicate with fellow workmen as there would have been in the days when the Wise's farmhouse was built. Would we want to go back to those days? What is the ultimate result of becoming dependent on these industrial beasts? How will nature's balance be maintained? I drove away thinking of these things, feeling that I was really seeing.



*Gerry Wise ©*





THE BEAST  
We've become dependent on our industrial beasts.





## GRAVEMARKERS

TVs become our gravestones, as our ability to see for ourselves is deadened.



# MURDER AT OTIS

## A Tramp Kills a Farmer's Wife with an Ax

*From the Hampshire Gazette*

*September 26, 1876*

Submitted by: Stanley Greenberg

The little town of Otis in Berkshire County reports a murder exceeding in atrocity and fiendishness, even the killing of J. Riley Farnsworth at Colrain for his bounty money, and Farmer Dickinson at Amherst for his larger savings, an old farmer and his wife being attacked for no cause, and the latter brutally killed by a tramp whom they had kindly sheltered from the storm. Charles Wood, a young Frenchman without home or connections in this country, killed Mrs. Jephtha Hazard at her home in Otis, Monday evening, by cutting her head open with an ax.

Jephtha Hazard and his wife, both over 70 years of age, lived by themselves in a little house, a mile and a half north from Otis Center, on the road to Lee. During the heavy shower, about half past six, Monday evening, Sept. 18, Wood knocked at the door, and asked the shelter of the house till the storm was over. After enjoying the hospitality of the unsuspecting couple for a while, the rain subsided, and he left the house; but, instead of continuing his tramp, he seized a heavy club from the wood pile near the door, went back into the house, and assaulted the old man, striking him on the head. In his attempt to ward off the blow, Mr. Hazard was considerably hurt in the arm, but succeeded in getting away from his assailant, and, running out of the house, hurried for

help toward the house of his nearest neighbor, George Tillotson. After he had gone, his aged but plucky wife, attempted to punish the villain for his attack on her husband by taking a club and giving him a severe blow on the back of the head, whereat Wood picked up an ax and hit the old woman three times in the face and head with its edge, inflicting wounds from which she died in two hours. Hazard and Tillotson arrived in a very few moments, and, finding Wood still in the house, secured him, though not until he had used his club again with good effect.

Deputy-Sheriff Day, the hotel-keeper at Otis Center, was sent for, and kept his prisoner in the hotel till 4 o'clock, Tuesday morning, when he started with him for Lee. During the night, the people of Otis gathered in considerable numbers about the hotel with a rope all prepared to lynch Wood with, and it required the most earnest persuasion of Mr. Day and some of his friends to prevent an attack on the building. Arriving at Lee about 6 o'clock, Wood was brought before Justice Pease, pleaded guilty to a complaint of murder, was bound over and put in charge of Deputy-Sheriff Cutting, and, before half-past eight, was safe in the county jail at Pittsfield.

The history of the affair comes partly from Wood, and partly from Hazard and



Tillotson. Wood says he shall tell the same story to the Grand Jury, for if he should try to tell a different one, it could easily be proved that he was lying. He says he was not drunk, having taken but two glasses of liquor that day. He had no reason to think that Mr. Hazard had any money in the house, and declares that he does not know of any reason for his assault. He shows a large bunch on the back of his head, where he says the woman hit him, but does not intimate that he retaliated in such a murderous way in self defense. He says he walked from Blandford, Monday, which is some 12 miles from the place of the murder. He had worked at farming, two or three months during the summer, for Mr. Heath of Curtisville, and was employed three years by Mr. Truesdale, the proprietor of the Curtisville limekiln.

Wood is a small fellow, weighing not more than 120 pounds, 25 years old, and has lost an eye, which helps give his face an ugly, vicious look. When asked if he knew what would be done with him if his own statement was true, he replied, "I don't care what they do," and someone inquiring if he knew what murder was, he said, "Yes, a man that kills another ought to be hung." If the Grand Jury find a bill and Wood pleads guilty before the Supreme Court, the plea will not be accepted, but counsel will be appointed by the court and a formal trial will be had.

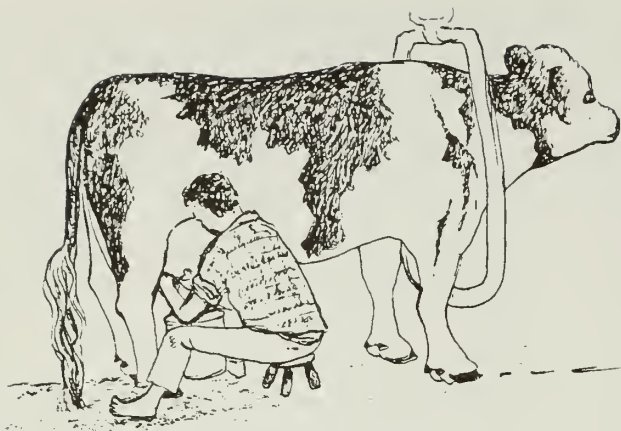
Jeptha Hazard and wife were well known in Otis and vicinity as a worthy old couple of most peaceable habits, and Wood does not intimate that they were in the least unkind to him or that there was any sign of a quarrel between him and them.

### *A Survey of Some of the Natural Water Falls in This Area:*

The most spectacular one, I believe, is the one known as the Sanderson Brook Falls in the Chester-Blandford State Forest. A close second is the well known Glendale Falls in Middlefield. But virtually unknown, off Cook Hill Road, about five hundred feet above the Chester-Huntington town line is a minor one on Cook Brook which, during spring run-off

and after periods of heavy rains, really comes to life. There are also many more—lesser ones—on many of the brooks which commence from sources at our higher elevations. Then, of course, there is the long series of runs, glides and drop-offs along the "Indian Walk" at the Windsor Jams in East Windsor.

*Carl Libardi*



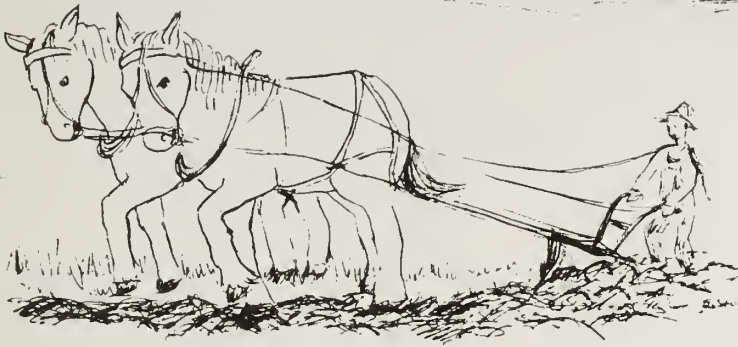
William S. Hart

## Going Back

*Now my hair is showing gray,  
I find nostalgia has a way  
of quietly walking on my thoughts  
to turn me back to bygone days;  
when every boy could milk a cow  
and turn a furrow with a plow,  
or back a team into a barn  
with load of hay to mow.*

*What words are there that can explain  
the tugging of a pair of reins,  
or the sound, in dead of night, of  
whistling, steam powered train.  
Peepers in the early spring  
would make the soggy meadow sing.  
I hear the blacksmith's hammer,  
sharply on his anvil ring.*





*Again I see the country view,  
smell the ferns fresh wet with dew;  
lie upon a hillside high  
staring through the distant blue.  
Someday soon, I will retrace,  
my steps back to that happy place,  
back to the boyhood family farm  
that time can not erase.*





From  
*Report on the Trees and Shrubs  
Growing Naturally in the Forests of Massachusetts*

published to an order of The Legislature  
by the Commissioners on the Zoological and Botanical  
survey of the State. Boston, 1846

PART II

PIN OAK, as it occurs in Massachusetts, is a fine, erect tree of medium height, irregularly branched and clad with a most luxuriant foliage. This tree is found in Stockbridge and the towns below it in Berkshire County. It is called *pin oak*, locally, from its use in making wooden pins or tree nails, for which purpose it is preferred to every other material. The wood of this oak is very solid and stiff. It is used for the axles, reaches, bolsters, and braces of wagons; for framing timbers, for sills and for floors; and for all the other purposes for which the best oak wood is employed. As fuel, it is preferred to white oak.

CHESTNUT OAK is not common in Massachusetts, but has been found in Russell.

BLACK OAK is used for ship timber, for floors and floor timbers. It has great strength and is extensively used by wagonmakers. The bark is highly valued by the tanner as it abounds in tannin. It is liable to give a yellow color to leather, which is communicated to articles that remain long in contact with it. The bark is also much used for dyeing. With various preparations it gives a great variety of shades of fawn color and yellow.

RED OAK comes to its greatest perfection in Massachusetts and is found in every part of the state, growing freely in every variety of soil, even the poorest. It has very little value as fuel or for most purposes as timber. It is used only for inferior purposes, where no other species of oak can be obtained.

For depth of shade, no tree is equal to the BEECH. The leaves remain on the branches longer than those of any deciduous tree, giving a cheerful aspect to the wood in winter. It deserves cultivation near houses. The leaves were formerly used as filling for beds, as the leaves remain soft and sweet for seven or eight years, while straw becomes musty and hard. The leaves retain the fragrant smell of green tea. The objection to beech leaves is the slight crackling noise as the person turns in bed.

The *beech tree* grows in every part of Massachusetts, but it is only in the forests of the western part that it attains its greatest height. It is there sometimes not less than one hundred feet high. The wood is hard, fine, smooth and close grain and very dense. It is excellent for the turner's use, and fine large bowls, trenchers, and trays are made of it. It is much used for

fuel and ranks next to rock maple. It is preferred to all other woods for the making of plane stocks; and for this purpose the wood which has grown most rapidly is found not only to have the smoothest and closest grain, but to be most durable and least liable to warp. It is also used for chair posts, of which great numbers are made of it in Becket and neighboring towns. It is used for saw handles, and for the bodies of carts, it answers well for lasts, and is preferred for the cylinders used in polishing glass.

It is a valuable wood for fuel, comparing well with rock maple and hickory, and its ashes furnish a great quantity of potash.

The *beech tree* is said never to be struck by lightning . . . In traveling through a forest country, many oaks may be found which have been so struck, but never a beech.

The AMERICAN CHESTNUT is one of the largest and tallest of our forest trees. It rises with a straight erect stem, hardly diminishing in size, to the height of sixty or seventy, and in forests in the southwest part of the state, to ninety or one hundred feet. It yields an abundance of sweet and delicious nuts. The wood of the chestnut is coarse grained, but it is strong and elastic, and very durable, even when exposed to alternations of dryness and moisture. It is, therefore, of great value for posts, which when charred, will last more than twenty years, and for rails, in which form it will last half a century. It is also much used as a substitute for oak and pine in building; beams and joists, and other parts of the frame made of it, being almost imperishable. It is used for shingles, but is less valuable for this purpose, on account of its warping when exposed to heat. It is extensively used in the manufacture of furniture. In the frame-work of articles to be covered with veneers of mahogany or

other ornamental wood, it stands better than any other native wood. The frame of bureaus and sofas, and the bottom and sides of drawers are made of it. It has been sometimes used for hoops, but is so far inferior to hickory and oak, that it is never used when they can be had.

It is ill adapted for use as fuel, except for closed fires, the air in its numerous pores causing it to snap disagreeably; but it forms excellent charcoal, the younger trees furnishing the best and heaviest. The bark of the chestnut abounds in tannin and in coloring matter. It is, therefore, valuable to the tanner, and may be used by the dyer. With iron, the extract may form an exceedingly black ink.

The *chestnut tree* flourishes on rocky hills, where there is no great depth of soil, on a surface difficult of tillage, and fit only for pasture or forest.

Southeast of Monument Mountain, near the road leading to Sheffield, in a pasture, an old chestnut, measured in September, 1844, at the ground, thirty feet two inches in circumference. At sixteen feet, it throws out several large branches which form a top of sixty feet across. Some of the branches are decaying and ruinous. Such fine old trees such as these, wherever found, ought to be spared. Nothing but the oak produces so superb an effect. An old chestnut throws out arms almost as strong as the oak, and its foliage forms as beautiful a mass and a thicker shade.

The AMERICAN HORNBEAM is a small tree, easily distinguished by its trunk, which is marked with longitudinal, irregular ridges, resembling those on the horns of animals of the deer kind. From its great resemblance to the European species (deer), it received at once from the earliest settlers this good English descriptive name. It is never a large tree. I measured one by the side of the Agawam River (Westfield River), near Chester Village,



which was three feet nine inches in circumference and about thirty feet high. It is found in almost every variety of soil except the most barren; but flourishes only in rich, moist land. The wood is close-grained and compact, and has great strength. It is used for beetles (hammers or mallets), levers, and for other purposes where strength and solidity are required, and it is well fitted for the use of the turner.

The AMERICAN HAZEL is a small, branched shrub, from three to six feet high. The hazel grows readily in dry or moist, light soil, by the sides of woods or walls. The fruit varies much in quality in different places. In taste, it is fully equal to the filbert. If the trees were carefully cultivated, the nuts would improve in quality. There are many road sides and borders of fields which might be planted with the hazel, from whence with little expense, a desirable addition to the table might be raised, which children could be employed to gather. Hazel gathering is, even now, a pleasant little festival for children.

The BUTTERNUT tree abounds on the Hoosic Mountains and among the Green Mountains (Berkshires). From the bark of this tree an extract is made which is sometimes employed as a medicine, and is valued as a safe purgative, peculiarly mild in its operation. The bark and the nutshells are also used to give a brown color to wood. The Shakers at Lebanon dye a rich purple with it. The young half-grown nuts, gathered early in June, make excellent pickles, and are much used for that purpose, the clammy down being removed, before pickling, by plunging them in boiling water and rubbing with a coarse cloth.

The wood is of little strength, but durable when exposed to heat and moisture, rather tough, and not liable to the attacks of worms. For gun-stocks, it is equally stiff,

elastic, and tough with black walnut, but less hard. It makes beautiful fronts of drawers, as used by the Shakers at Lebanon, and excellent light, tough, and durable wooden bowls. In the western part of the state, coffins are often made of it. Where abundant, it is used for posts and rails, and for the smaller timbers in house frames. It is sometimes used for the panels of coaches and other carriages, being pliable, not splitting when nails are driven into it, and from its porosity, receiving paint extremely well. In Richmond, I measured a butternut tree which was thirteen feet and three inches in circumference.

The BLACK WALNUT is a fine tree with spreading branches and a broad, round head. The wood of the *Black Walnut* is of a dark violet or purple color, becoming deeper and almost black with age. It is valuable for its fineness of grain, tenacity, hardness, strength and durability. These qualities, together with its beauty and toughness, render it preferable to any other material for the stocks of muskets. The wood is beautifully shaded, and admits of a fine polish, and it is now very extensively used in the manufacture of tables, chairs, bureaus, bedsteads, and other cabinet work, and sometimes for bookshelves and the cornices and panels of rooms. Posts made of it last for more than a quarter of a century. From the kernel of the seed, a valuable and abundant oil may be expressed, superior to most others for use in cookery and for lamps. Bread has also been made from the kernels. The spongy husk of the nuts is used as a dye-stuff.

The HICKORY—a valuable timber tree, is peculiar to America. It is a stately tree at its full height. When the young plants have attained the height of from five to eight feet, they may be thinned out for the purpose of making walking sticks, for which the consumption is very con-

siderable, and the demand constantly increasing. When at the height of fifteen or twenty feet and from two to four inches in diameter, they may be still further thinned for hoops. The uses to which hickory wood is put are very numerous. Great numbers of walking sticks are made of it, as for this purpose, no other native wood equals it in beauty and strength. It is next in value to white oak for making hoops, of which great quantities are made in the state. The price these bring is such, that it is doubtful whether land of a suitable quality can in any other way be made so productive, as in raising them. Hickory makes the best screws, the smoothest and most durable handles for chisels, augers, gimlets, axes, and many other common tools. Seasoned wood of some varieties is equal in durability to iron wood for mallets, being tougher and more durable than white oak. The sailor prefers a hickory handspike. Its smoothness and tenacity recommend it for the screws of presses, the rings which confine the sails of small vessels to the mast, and for the cogs of gristmills. The carriage maker employs it for the springs of gigs, and whiffle-trees of coaches, and the shafts of light wagons. The farmer makes of it the teeth of his rakes, bows for his yokes, and handles for his axes; uses it when oak cannot be readily found, for axle-trees, saws it into planks for barn floors. For tide mills, it is preferable to oak timber, as it is not attacked by worms when in salt water. Its defects are that it shrinks much and irregularly, and therefore warps, that it is liable to the attacks of worms, and decays rapidly when exposed to moisture.

As a fuel, *hickory* is preferred to every other wood, burning freely, even when green, making a pleasant brilliant fire, and throwing out great heat. Charcoal made from it is heavier than that from any other

wood. The ashes of the hickories abound in alkali, and are considered better for the purpose of making soap than any other of the native woods, being next to those of the apple tree.

The BIRCH family consists of graceful trees and shrubs, natives of the colder regions. The bark is thin and has astringent properties. The wood is soft, close, fine-grained, rather light and not durable when exposed to alternations of dryness and moisture. Several of the birches are valuable as timber trees, most of them as fuel, and all as ornaments in the landscape. The great defect of birch timber is its proneness to decay. This may be, in a degree, prevented by felling the tree in summer or in early autumn, and immediately stripping off the bark. The birches have a great abundance of sap, which is sometimes obtained in large quantities by tapping the vigorous trees. It is sweetish, with an agreeable acid taste, and forms a pleasant drink. It is said to be sometimes used with perry (a fermented drink made from pear juice), in the manufacture of what seems to be, while new, tolerably good Champagne wine. It is also used to make vinegar. The inner bark of some species is used to give a bright orange dye.

BLACK BIRCH has an agreeable spicy odor and taste to the leaves and inner bark, and is often called sweet birch. It flourishes most in the mountainous districts. The wood is easily wrought, and as it has firmness, strength, and durability, it is much used in the arts. It has a delicate rose color, which deepens from exposure. It is in request for the panels in the foot and head-boards of bedsteads, and in other cabinet furniture. It is sometimes used to make yokes, which proves its strength can be considerable. It is also used for joists, for bedsteads, and for



chairs, for which it is a beautiful material, though it does not bend as well as yellow birch. Small tubs are made of it, and it is sometimes used for back-boards in carriages.

The *Black Birch* is excellent for fuel, next indeed to the rock maple in the Berkshires. A decoction of the bark, with copperas, is used for coloring woolen a beautiful and permanent drab, bordering on wine color.

YELLOW BIRCH is a lofty tree with yellowish bark of a soft silken texture and silvery or pearly lustre. The *Yellow Birch* is often found seven or eight feet in circumference. The wood of this tree is applied to numerous uses. Bending readily, it is particularly adapted to the making of the posts and bars of chairs. It is used for the staves of small and inferior casks, for boot-trees, and for joists and bedsteads. In Richmond, among the Shakers, floors are made of it, as also of the *Black Birch*. It is valuable as fuel. At Lanesboro, I measured, in 1838, a *Yellow Birch* of ten feet seven inches girth at the ground.

The CANOE BIRCH or *Paper Birch* is a northern tree and never attains a very large size in Massachusetts. The sap wood of the *Canoe Birch* is beautifully white. It is soft, smooth, takes a fine polish with a pearly lustre, and is, therefore, fitted for ornamental works. But it is perishable when exposed to alternations of moisture, and not remarkable for strength. A *Canoe Birch* cut in summer and kept constantly from the weather, is very durable and becomes very hard. I have seen studs made of it nearly forty years old, entirely free of decay. It is used in the manufacture of chairs, and in other cabinet work. A portion taken from a part of the trunk from which a large branch issues, makes a beautiful feathered and variegated surface for the front of a bureau or for a table.

Formerly when large old trees of this species were more common, the country people placed large pieces of the bark immediately below the shingles of the roof, to form a more impenetrable covering for their houses. Many old buildings in the back parts of New England are still found covered in this way. Carefully laid, it makes a covering impenetrable to rain, and a most effectual screen against heat and cold, as it is almost imperishable. Baskets, boxes and portfolios are made of it, which are sometimes embroidered with silk of different colors. Divided into very thin sheets, it forms a substitute for paper, and placed between the sole of the shoes and in the crown of the hat, it is a defense against humidity. But the most important purpose to which it is applied, and one in which it is replaced by the bark of no other tree, is the construction of canoes, from the tough incorruptible bark. To procure proper pieces, the largest and smoothest trunks are selected. In the spring, two circular incisions are made several feet apart, and two longitudinal ones on opposite sides of the tree, after which, by introducing a wooden wedge, the bark is easily detached. These plates are usually ten or twelve feet long and two feet nine inches broad. To form the canoe, they are stitched together with fibrous roots of the *White Spruce*, about the size of a quill, which are deprived of the bark, split, and supplied with water. The seams are coated with resin of the Balm of Gilead.

The GRAY BIRCH (*Betula Populifolia*) is a much smaller tree with feathery foliage, white trunk, and showing triangular dusky spaces below its black branches. This birch is valuable for the rapidity with which it grows on any kind of soil, or even without soil. It makes tolerable fuel, less valuable doubtless than the wood of most other deciduous trees, but answering well

for the common purposes of the kitchen for more than half the year. It grows on poor land where scarcely anything else will, and on good land may be advantageously cut every ten years. It makes valuable coal for smiths.

**ALDERS**—The wood and bark of the *Alder* are extensively used for dyeing and for tanning, as the bark abounds in tannin. The *Alder* usually occurs along streams and protects their banks from erosion by the running water. The matted roots give stability to the banks of soft earth and keep the stream within its bounds. The *Common Alder* is too small a tree to be used for its wood except as fuel, as it seldom grows more than twelve or fourteen feet high. It makes excellent fuel, burning readily and throwing out much heat. It is preferred to any other tree for making charcoal used in the manufacture of gunpowder. It is also employed for the hoops of small casks, such as are used to contain nails or gunpowder.

The **WAX MYRTLE** family—the leaves of this bush, when crushed, feel some-

what resinous and exhale a strong penetrating and rather unpleasant odor. They are often placed in drawers for the purpose of keeping out moths. The young buds are used by the Indians to dye their porcupine quills.

*Wax Myrtle (Bay Berry)* is a crooked shrub. The berries, leaves and recent shoots are fragrant with a balsamic odor. The wax is obtained by boiling the berries in water. It rises to the surface and hardens on cooling. About one third part of the weight of the berries consists of wax. It can be mixed with tallow or beeswax to make candles. Candles made of it diffuse a very agreeable perfume, and give a less brilliant light than those made entirely of animal substance. The wax of the *Bay Berry* is also made into hard soap with the lye of wood ashes, lime, and common salt; one pound of wax being sufficient for ten pounds of soap, and taking the place of the animal or vegetable oils used in the manufacture of common soaps. A decoction of the root has been sometimes used as a remedy for dysentery.





# CHANGE

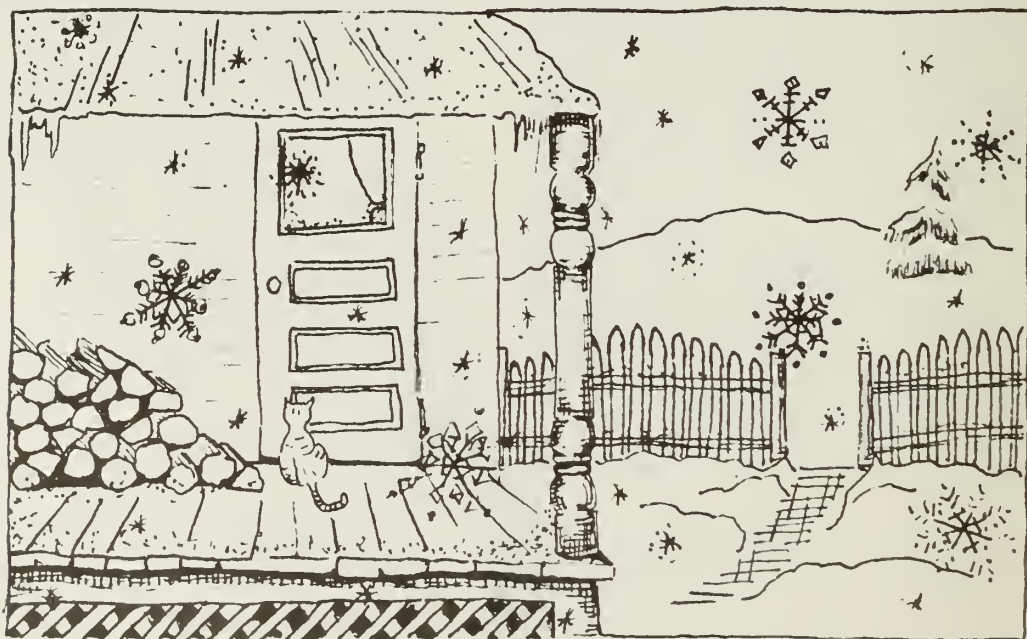
*By Jack Maxson*

This afternoon, I looked up through the reddening branches of a birch tree at the innocent blue sky and accepted the promise of another spring.

I've been fighting it, for there was something about the stillness of this winter that I was not quite willing to surrender just yet. It's a battle I go through every year—something I have held onto from childhood. Even though the latter snows of this winter have been wet and spongy, I have been wanting the season to stay just a little longer.

My love affair with winter starts every November, as the soil slowly turns to brown iron and the sky becomes a perpetual gray, muting the colors of meadow and woodlot. Suddenly, the child in me is turned loose, wanting snow in unheard-of quantities, borne on sharp, tearing winds. My fantasies demand drift-closed roads beyond plowing, with black skies that promise still more storming.

The days before that first real snow seem to drag endlessly. I peer out of the window dozens of times a day, hoping to



see the rumpled cumulus that will bring it all, but the waiting goes on, becoming almost a tangible hurt.

There are the teasers—the furious little squalls that blank out the world, then disappear—and the dawn storms that come just to remind me how it will look when winter truly begins.

And at last, that first good storm comes, howling and leaping around my house like a wild beast trying to claw its way inside to get at the warmth and comfort. The whiteness slants down, swirling and eddying around the corners and sweeping off the roof in blinding gasps. One by one, the wintering plants and bushes sink into the drifts so that I lose my channel markers that tell me where my paths are.

When the daylight fades, I turn on the outside floodlight to watch the swarming, insect-like flakes scudding and looping, and I put another log in the stove, not because it is colder, but as a symbol of my defiance against the violence of the storm.

I sleep less when it snows heavily, for the little boy inside me is keyed up by the madness of the storm. I watch it late into the night, then wake an hour or more before my usual time, entranced by the strange brightness of the ceiling of my room. The storm continues, and there is the shivering fantasy that it will never stop, that the world I know will end in ice crystals and shrieking winds. The day seems short; in just a few hours it appears to be getting dark again outside, and still the snow comes. My child-nature is ecstatic—a little frightened, but overjoyed.

Then, in the hours before midnight, it slackens, slowly at first, then rapidly, and soon there are stars in the soft blackness above. I open the door to motionless, searing-cold air, and there is nothing—not the

bark of a dog or the rattle of a branch. The little boy wonders fearfully if he might be the only survivor.

As the winter goes on and more storms come, I begin to forget about the world beneath it all—the garden, the boulders, the shrubs, the sleeping bulbs of spring, the birdbath. As soon as the surface shows stains of dust or sand or chimney soot, another storm comes to whiten it back to perfection. Summer memories become fables; the only reality is the rippled whiteness.

But then, the sun begins to sweep higher and higher above the horizon, so swiftly I think I can see the change every day. I begin to resist, forgetting the insistence of the calendar, for I am not ready to let it go. The rotting windrows of plowed snow beside the highways mean nothing to me. In a day or two, they will be replenished and whitened again and I will have my winter back. I ignore the green stains appearing on the snow-covered ponds; they, too, will vanish. The mud in my lane freezes every night; winter has not gone, nor will I let it.

But there comes a time when nature forces the issue with me, as it did today.

It's the same every year. I step out onto my porch, blinded by the brightness of the sun-reflecting snow and feeling almost tipsy in the soft southern wind. A movement catches my eye and I turn to see a giant fly twitching and walking about near the top of one of the pillars. There will be freezing weather, more snow, and ice storms for another month, but the fly is there, proclaiming the end of winter just as surely as the first birds that will soon return from the south. I look away, not wanting to confront that reality. I step into the shadow beside my shed and find the air still cold and the ground still frozen. I am reassured. The fly has made a fatal





mistake; winter's hold has not been weakened at all.

I button my jacket and set off down the lane. Frost heaves have thrown up rocks the size of a cat's head and the sand and mud are deeply rutted. I reach the road and walk along the side, hearing the trickling and bubbling of water running down the hill. I look at the ditch and see black snakes twisting and writing under the

shallow coating of ice. Here and there I see strands of greenness—something arguing against the persistence of winter. The boy that I was and am begins to feel the welling of unshed tears in his throat and I look up through the branches of the birches at that pale, perfect sky.

It is all over; I must accept spring. And suddenly it is the only thing I want.



# Hannah Gibbs' Diary

## NORTH BLANDFORD

### PART V

*Submitted by: Patricia Gibbs*

Dec. 14 Commenced snowing about 9 a.m. & kept it up all day

Dec. 15 - Sun. Snowing this p.m. Hattie did not go to church has a cold

Dec. 16 Harold drew four loads of wood quite pleasant

Dec. 17 Pleasant Mr & Mrs John Gibbs & Bertha took tea to Hattie's A son to Leon & Ethel Ripley A son to Clarence & Rosa Waite

Dec. 18 - Wed. Pleasant I called on Mrs Nye & Mrs Cannon today Bert went out to the Center in the p.m. Fine sleighing

Dec. 19 Pleasant Harold drawing lumber from John Gibbs

Dec. 20 A nice pleasant day rather cool Hattie went to Chester

Dec. 21 - Sat. Pleasant Bert & Harold went to Huntington with lumber

Dec. 22 Hattie, Harold & Kenneth went to church our folks all but Robert were at church today A very pleasant day

Dec. 23 Has rained most all day

Dec. 24 - Tues. A pleasant day Harold went to Chester after grain

Dec. 25 Pleasant Harold drawing wood

Dec. 26 Harold finished drawing wood

Dec. 27 - Fri. A pleasant day the boys went with butter

Dec. 28 Pleasant until 11 a.m. then clouded up & commenced to rain about noon & rained about two hours

Dec. 29 Hattie, Harold & Kenneth went to church a very pleasant day

Dec. 30 - Mon. A rainy day

Dec. 31 Raining hard at 9 last night ended off with a snow squal

### 1908

Jan. 1 Pleasant the boys went fishing on the Meadow pond

Jan. 2 - Wed. Pleasant Heard of the death of Mrs Fred Pease

Jan. 3 Bert & Hattie went to Mrs Fred Pease funeral

Jan. 4 Pleasant

Jan. 5 - Sun. Pleasant did not storm, wind blew some

Jan. 6 Pleasant did not get a letter from Ella

Jan. 7 Ella letter came Mrs Frary dead Snowed in p.m. & rained hard in the evening

Jan. 8 Mrs D. Frary buried today Bert went to Chester Pleasant

Jan. 9 Hattie & Harold went to Westfield pleasant

Jan. 10 Leslie went with butter

Jan. 11 - Sat. Pleasant Bert went to Huntington Mr & Mrs Sartell were here today Bertha came, Ruth gone to see Bertha & spend the night. Mrs. Herrick 66 years old



Jan. 12 Raining hard this morning  
Bert lost a new milk cow

Jan. 13 Rainy & cloudy all day not  
very cold

Jan. 14 Cleared off cold & is very  
windy

Jan. 15 Pleasant Bert & Leslie cut-  
ting logs

Jan. 16 - Thurs. Cloudy & has  
snowed very little

Jan. 17 Came home from Hattie's A  
pleasant day

Jan. 18 Pleasant May took Mrs  
Hamlington home

Jan. 19 - Sun. A very pleasant day  
Frank, Amy & Elsie went to church

Jan. 20 A raw windy day, cloudy

Jan. 21 A very pleasant day in the  
a.m. but cloudy in the p.m.

Jan. 22 A very pleasant day

Jan. 23 Colder & some cloudy

Jan. 24 A snow storm from the North  
East blew & did not amount to much

Jan. 25 Robert drew up 4 loads of  
wood

Jan. 26 Fair in the a.m. Barnes baby  
died last night Clouded up in the p.m.

Jan. 27 - Mon. Rained some in the  
night

Jan. 28 Quite cold

Jan. 29 Cloudy & windy

Jan. 30 10 below zero this morning

Jan. 31 8 below zero, pleasant sun  
shone all day

Feb. 1 - Sat. Snowing this a.m. rained  
a little just to keep some of the snow, snow-  
ing just at night

Feb. 2 Has grown cold snow flying  
this morning. No meeting today

Feb. 3 Very cold & windy Allston  
Gleason came to work for Frank

Feb. 4 - Tues. 10 below zero this  
morning A very cold day Amy came home  
with Mrs (?) stough Allston got up five  
loads of wood today

Feb. 5 Allston has gotten four loads of  
wood 14 below zero this morning

Feb. 6 Snowed about 5 inches last  
night Frank, Olive, Donald & Amy went to  
Chester in the evening to a Drama

Feb. 7 Not as cold windy & snow fly-  
ing

Feb. 8 Cold & blustering Allston got  
(not finished)

Feb. 9 - Sun. 10 below zero this  
morning Robert went to church

Feb. 10 Warmer & pleasant Allston  
drew up five loads of wood

Feb. 11 Frank & Olive went to West-  
field

Feb. 12 Bert, Hattie & Kenneth came  
over today they took dinner in Frank's  
room

Feb. 13 Rained some in the am.  
warm & foggy in p.m.

Feb. 14 Warmer snow going fast

Feb. 15 Snow all gone

Feb. 16 - Sun. Our folks went to  
church in a wagon Ruth, Amy & Frank  
went Amy went home with Hattie

Feb. 17 Cold & windy

Feb. 18 Pleasant but cold Mrs Ham-  
lington came over this p.m.

Feb. 19 Snowing from S. East piled  
up all day in the evening had some hail  
that staid

Feb. 20 Snow does not pack good  
Went over to Mrs Lewis Olive went in  
the morning

Feb. 21 - Fri. Allston drew 3 loads of  
ice for Mr Loring

Feb. 22 Allston drew 4 loads of ice  
for Mr Loring

Feb. 23 Frank, Olive, Donald & Elsie  
went to church Amy came home

Feb. 24 Drawing ice

Feb. 25 Drawing ice

Feb. 26 A snow storm from the N.  
East

# A Little Bit of Nostalgia

by Dorothy J. Carroll

Our house has been for sale for five months now, and the reason it hasn't sold, they tell me, is that it has only *one* bathroom!

Yes, this is the 1980's, where it is fashionable, and apparently for the younger generation, *necessary*, to have more than one bathroom in order to raise even *one* child. How did we old-timers ever do it? There were never any complaints in my sister's family of nine—it just took a little organizing. We all felt very fortunate in having an *indoor* bathroom, nice and warm, with running water in the sink and, above all, a BATHTUB.

Back home on the farm, in the 1930's, we had one of the better outhouses in the town of Worthington. This was because my father was manager of a farm owned by a wealthy man, Mr. Greene, who not only had a beautiful farmhouse and out-buildings, but a quiet country lane going past his picture window where there was a constant parade of his pet fowl and typical farm animals — ducks, geese, guinea hens, turkeys, rabbits, sheep, pigs, goats, cows and horses. Mr. Greene was an invalid and his only entertainment, besides listening to "Lum and Abner" on the radio, was watching that daily parade.

It was a fun place to live, and even to attend the one-room schoolhouse, two miles away, where Miss Stedman taught eight grades. There were two of us in the fourth grade — my "boyfriend" and I. That year, I learned only one thing — how to tell time. We used to spend our noon hours fishing in the brook, with a long

stick as our pole and a safety pin as the hook on which to squeeze the worm for bait. (We did catch several trout which added to the evening's meal of salt pork and milk gravy.) We always took our time getting back home after school, dilly-dallying along the way, jumping stones to get across the brook, picking wild strawberries in the fields, and occasionally, having a fist-fight with one or the other. We didn't know about schoolbuses in those days, since there weren't any, so we never complained about the long hikes to and from school. This was our way of life.

One below-freezing day, I had frost-bitten hands and feet by the time I arrived at school, since our mittens were very thin and we had only rubbers to cover our thin-soled shoes and these did little good in the foot-deep snow and ice. I had to sit by the pot-belly stove in the schoolroom to thaw out and became so weak and sick that a neighbor had to come in his horse-drawn sleigh to take me over the two-mile track back home. I was out of school for three weeks (no doctor around, of course) with an illness of some kind or just plain sick! In those days, sick was "sick" — no fancy names for anything. I probably would not have remembered this event and the illness had it not been for my dreaded trips to the outhouse to relieve myself at both ends. We had a three-holer, which they called "comfort holes," in sizes for papa, mama, and baby. I was always fearful of falling right down through, even the baby hole! I couldn't even read the Sears & Roebuck catalog out there, since I

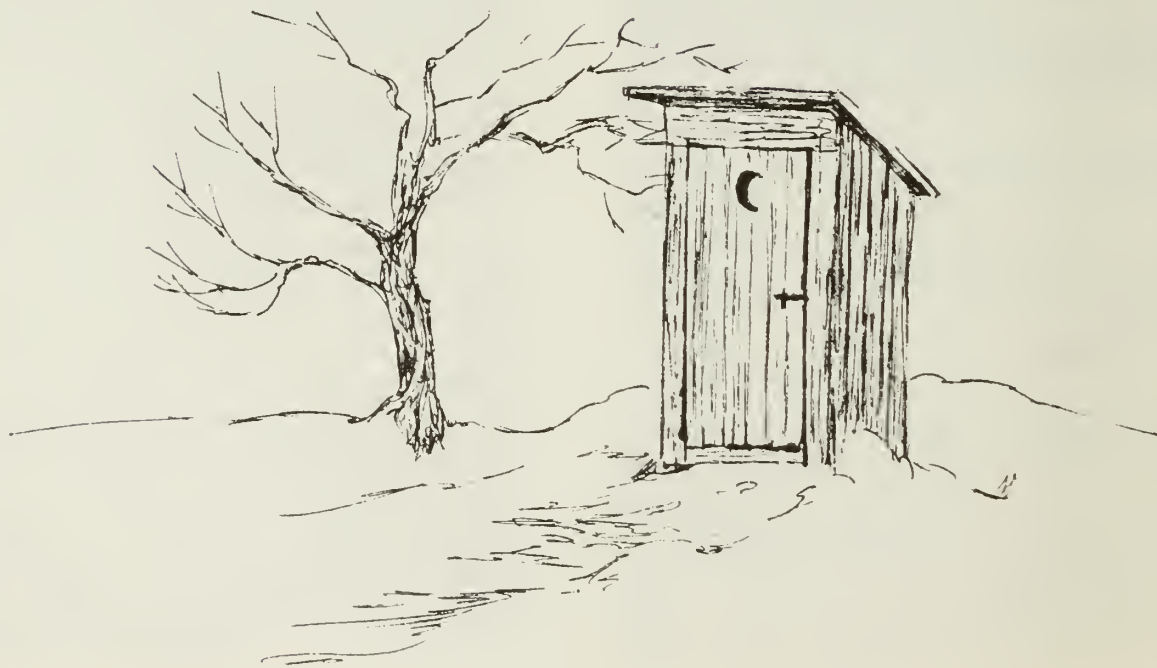


had to hang onto the seat with both hands to avoid falling into the pit below. Of course, we had no toilet tissue in those days, and we used to save the papers from the oranges since they weren't too scratchy, but boy! — those shiny pages from the Sears' catalog were the kind that one never forgets!

No, we had no schoolhouses or indoor bathrooms with showers or jacuzzis, but our lives were rich in family ties and with days filled with laughter and awe at the many wonderful things in nature surrounding us. The bars on the pasture gate were our only gym equipment, where we hung by our feet and swung back and forth, until we discovered that it was even more fun to climb a tree and swing out

over the brooks and ponds on the end of a rope. (Tarzan did not invent this — *we did!*) The out-of-doors was more educational than the little one-room schoolhouse. We would watch the clouds roll overhead in different shapes as we lay under the shade of the big maple tree on a warm summer afternoon, watch the ants carry their prey as they sucked honey from the dew-laden blossoms, and found excitement in picking the daisies in the fields and finding four-leaf clovers.

So, why should we even *think* of ever owning a bathroom other than the one we had that was so close to nature? It surely was practical, accommodating *three* people all at once, whereas today's "necessary rooms" accommodate only *one* at a time. Is this progress?



# *In Tribute*

## TO A NEWSPAPERMAN

### *Town of Russell*

by Richard C. Garvey — (*Newspaper Source Unknown*)

Russell should be our favorite town name, for it was chosen in tribute to a newspaperman.

That 8340-acre tract of Westfield's "New Addition" was incorporated with that name by the General Court and Gov. John Hancock. Histories do not explain the choice, but tradition says that the name was given in honor of a prominent citizen of Boston who was closely associated with public affairs.

The honored man, so described, should not be too difficult to locate in history. The incorporation was in 1792 when Massachusetts, like President Washington who was serving his first term, was strongly Federalist.

#### **Boston Federalist**

All we have to do is find a prominent Boston Federalist in 1792 whose name is Russell and we have our man. All trails lead to one person.

Benjamin Russell, a native of Boston, ran away with Colonial troops when he was 13 and was serving as a clerk to a Connecticut militia company when his father found him, gave him a thrashing, and apprenticed him to the owner of the Massachusetts Spy, which had just left Boston for safer Worces-

ter. Benjamin enlisted again but was released when his age became known, and he did not get into uniform legally until near the end of the Revolution.

#### **Founded Publications**

At 22, when two months a husband and two years a journeyman printer, he founded the Massachusetts Centinel and the Republican Journal. From 1786 to 1828, he was its sole owner and editor. He changed its name (first to Massachusetts Centinel, then Columbia Centinel) more often than he changed its policy which was first, last and always Federalist. As editor of the most influential and enterprising journal in the state, Benjamin Russell became an important citizen.

When the Constitution for which he labored was enacted, he offered to publish gratuitously all laws and other official documents of the United States Congress, "the country being almost or quite bankrupt."

The offer was accepted but when, a few years later, Mr. Russell gave the United States his receipted bill for \$7000, Washington heard about it and personally intervened. "This must not be. When Mr. Russell offered to publish the laws without pay, we were poor. It was a generous offer. We are now able to pay our debts. This is a



debt of honor and must be discharged," were the President's own words. Congress paid the \$7000.

### Generous Public Support

After serving in many public offices and both houses of the Legislature, he was elected to the Governor's Council when he was 75 years old.

Until he died in his 84th year, Benjamin Russell retained his generous public spirit.

Mr. Russell gave to the Monroe administration its famous name, "Era of good feeling," and few challenge the claim that he coined the word, "gerrymander." There certainly appears to be no question that this Boston editor's own name was given to the Township of Russell 175 years ago.



## PRIMOGENITURE

*It's nice to know from whence your 'line,'  
Who were your foreign forebears,  
Which clans in spousal did combine  
Or who "sneaked up the backstairs."*

*Perhaps your sire sailed ocean tides  
Aboard Mayflower or the Kalmar.  
Intrepid souls to seek new countrysides,  
Following an "iffy" lodestar.*

*You may have finally traced your line  
Back to Sir Peter Paleface, pilgrim,  
Or to Skookum skulking in woodbine  
There to welcome or to kill him!*

Ann Sherwood

# Genealogical Queries

*Compiled By: Grace Wheeler*

Looking for information on Caroline M. Stewart, born June 13, 1816, Blandford, Mass., married William Clark Aug. 20, 1839. Who were their parents and where were they born?

*Mrs. Robert Popp  
3 Camp Avenue  
Walton, NY 13856*

Need information on Mercy Ann (Fish) Johnson, wife of Oliver Johnson. Are they buried in Huntington, Mass? Need birth date for Oliver and death date for Mercy. Was she perhaps Anna, born Jan. 10, 1838?

*Mrs. Patricia B. Gibbs  
104 Sly Run Place  
Noblesville, IN 46060*

Would like to hear from any descendants of James Wheeler who died Aug. 31, 1828 in Montgomery, Mass. His wife was Thankful French who died Nov. 19, 1841. They had son Royal, born June 1779 at Southampton, Mass., died Sept. 6, 1830 Hancock, Delaware County, New York.

*Ms. Georgia M. Rogers  
39 Spartan Village  
Wrightstown, NJ 08562*

Looking for information on Keziah Doolittle of Blandford, Mass., who married Nathan Parks, int. Nov. 13, 1781, in Montgomery, Mass. Who were her parents? Did Nathan marry more than once? If so, to whom?

*Mrs. Thelma Wells  
Frost Road  
Washington, MA 01223*

Would like any information on Joseph Fuller, who married Priscilla Greenslit in Montgomery, Mass. Nov. 7, 1801. Who were his parents?

*Grace Wheeler  
Huntington Historical Society  
430 Worthington Road  
Huntington, MA 01050*

*Correction on page 24 of FALL 1987 issue  
Map of Murrayfield, not Middlefield.*



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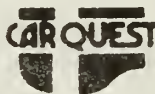
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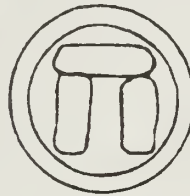
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*There is a great wall  
That may stop the body  
But what can stop the soul?*

Vicki Gobetz

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